

KANGAROO CARE

DEFINITION

Kangaroo care is a form of skin-to-skin contact between a parent and her preterm baby. The baby, wearing only a diaper and a hat, is held in an upright position against the parent's bare chest. This is called kangaroo care because it is similar to the way a baby kangaroo is snuggled against its mother.

Kangaroo care decreases some of the parents' stress associated with the infant being in SCBU and allows them to touch and feel their baby.

In 1988, a research published in the Journal of Neonatal Network found that preemies that were kangarooed had a more stable heart rate and better respiration, and often need less time on artificial breathing devices. Kangaroo Care has been shown to provide a number of benefits to both parents and babies e.g. increased parent-infant bonding, earlier breast-feeding, decreased time spent in the hospital, increased ability to keep warm, increased deep sleep states, decreased breathing pauses and apnea, increased oxygen level, decreased number of slow heart rate spells, rapid weight gaining and decreased crying. On the other hand, parents will have the ability to cope with the stress and emotions of having a high-risk infant and confidence that they can care for their baby even more than the hospital staff.

Mothers and fathers are both encouraged to kangaroo as the feel of their bodies are different and will provide different sources of stimulation to the baby.

Criteria for selection

- Babies less than 1.5 kg
- Not in ambient oxygen is preferred, but babies who need oxygen or nasal CPAP may also be eligible with continued cardiopulmonary and oximetry monitoring during kangaroo care.
- Mother is interested and willing to take part
- Kangaroo care is part of minimal handling philosophy
- Babies receiving IV fluids can be included

EQUIPMENT

- Curtains and comfortable chair
- Clean sheets and blanket
- Hat and diaper
- Resuscitation bag and mask connected to oxygen source
- Suction equipment

SECTION 11

11.1 KANGAROO CARE

- Thermometer
- Pulse oximeter

PROCEDURE

SN	Action	Rationale
01	Explain the procedure to the parents.	To ensure they understand the purpose and the importance of kangaroo care.
02	Instruct the mother / father to wash and dry their hands before giving kangaroo care.	Hand washing prevents transmission of microorganisms.
03	Provide a comfortable chair and privacy.	Providing the mother with privacy and proper positioning will help in giving good kangaroo care.
04	Ensure that all resuscitation equipment is present near to the baby.	Resuscitation equipment will be available and ready for use in case of emergency.
05	Attach the pulse oximetry to the baby.	To monitor the baby throughout the procedure.
06	Check the baby's temperature	To ensure thermal stability before starting the procedure.
07	Ask mother to wear suitable clothes before starting the procedure. Instruct and help the mother to obtain a comfortable position in the chair.	Correct positioning provides comfort to both mother and baby.
08	Undress the baby leaving only the nappy and hat on. Loosen the front part of the mother's clothes and remove the bra.	10 – 20% of heat loss is through the head. To provide skin-to-skin contact.
09	Hand the baby over to the mother and place the baby in the upright position between mother's breasts. (See diagram).	To enhance breathing.
10	Position the baby's head to the side (right / left) with the ear placed over the parent's heart so that the nose is not blocked.	The rhythmic beat of the parent's heart comforts the baby and promotes a steady heart rate.

SN	Action	Rationale
11	Button up the front part of the mother's clothes covering the baby and if needed extra sheets can be used to provide warmth, ensuring that monitoring cables and IV infusion lines are arranged without tangles.	For the comfort of both mother and baby.
12	Leave the mother and baby in kangaroo care for 30 minutes once a day initially, then 2-3 times a day 2-3 hours as long as mother is willing to kangaroo her baby.	This helps in building a strong parent-infant bonding.
13	Initially observe the mother and baby throughout the procedure.	To detect any signs of distress from the baby and to ensure mother's comfort.
14	At the end of the procedure, place the baby back into the incubator and redress baby as per baby's condition.	To maintain neutral thermal environment for the baby.
15	Check the baby's temperature and compare it with the previous one.	To see the difference before and after the procedure.
16	Wash and dry hands.	Hand washing minimizes the transmission of microorganisms.
17	Document the procedure in all relevant places.	To maintain accurate record keeping.

REFERENCES

World Health Organization (2003)

Kangaroo Mother Care: A practical guide

Geneva, World Health Organization Library Cataloging-in-Publication Data